

Ms Esther Chor Leng Goh was featured in the "Who's Who" book 2002 and 2003 ("People at the Peak, a publication of the Singapore Press Holdings) as one of the outstanding leaders of the Voluntary Welfare Sector in Singapore. Since middle 1980s Esther works as Research Officer, Senior Research Officer at Singapore National Council of Social Service, and at Agape Counseling and Training Centre, as Head of Family Counseling Department, Deputy Director and Executive Director. Using her nearly twenty years experiences and skills Esther is completing her PhD dissertation at Dept of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Hong Kong.

Her seminar titled "Ageing – a burden or blessing: Comparison between grandparenthood in Xiamen and Singapore" Diverging from the dominant research effort which has discussed the impact of China's graying demography and the impending problem of supporting an ageing population, this presentation looks at the aged as important contributors to contemporary urban Chinese families in China. The researcher challenges the homogenous stereotypical 'unproductive', 'dependent', 'burden to society' images which many have accorded to older persons after their retirement from gainful employment in mainland China. Using the ethnographic data and a large scale survey (N=1600) the researcher will show how grandparents are integral parts of the process of raising grandchildren and of family life in urban Xiamen. The presentation will elucidate the sacrifices made by grandparents and their motivations for these altruistic behaviours as there is no tangible reward for their caring role. The scenario of intergenerational ties in Xiamen will be compared and contrasted with Singapore, a predominately Chinese city in Asia.